SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: Sir, like in Jamshedpur, TISCO has upgraded their own airport for civilian use, let the Rourkela Steel Plant or SAIL upgrade that airport for civilian use. You can ask the commercial companies to operate them.

DR. CHANDAN MITRA: It is for you to ask them.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: There is no issue. It is a private airport belonging to SAIL. Let the SAIL operate it and I am sure that the commercial operation will start. (Ends)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question Hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS

Listed companies for expansion in higher education sector

*441. SHRI DARA SINGH: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware of the need to make higher education in the country independent of Ministry's interference and to ensure quality by allowing the listed companies to expand higher education programmes;

(b) whether Government is in favour of increasing the enrolment rate in higher education to over 20 per cent from present 12 per cent; and

(c) if so, what is Government's view to regulate higher education through an independent regulator, who may remove entry barrier to allow more players as well as give students more choice to choose from?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) to (c) The Government is committed to the autonomy of universities and other institutions of higher learning. The National Policy on Education as well as judicial pronouncements, are against the commercialization of higher education. While any company can assist in providing for improving research and quality of institutions of higher education, there is no proposal at present to allow listed companies to directly establish institutions in higher education. Creation of an overarching regulatory body in higher and technical education, working at arm's length from Government, is one of the priorities of the Government. One of the objectives of Eleventh Five Year Plan, is to strengthen the quality of higher education, for which several academic reforms, have been initiated.

The Eleventh Five Year Plan as approved by the National Development Council (NDC), has a target to increase Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) by 5% by the end of the Eleventh Five Year Plan period (2007-12) and increasing it to 21% by the end of the Twelfth Five Year Plan period.

Revision of wages for Bank employees

*445. SHRI VARINDER SINGH BAJWA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the revision of wages of the officers and staff of Public Sector Banks is due since November, 2007;